ABOVEGROUND
INGROUND

*The rustic strcutures blanaced with 21st cetury expanditure form Londons railway systems. Like all transportation networks across the world their purpose is to connect. Throughout the tunnels, across the tracks and bridges, on the platforms and in the carriges we exist amongst undisclosed mysteries , coincidences and uncertainties. The journeys that we experience however memorable, reflect our traits as human beings.*

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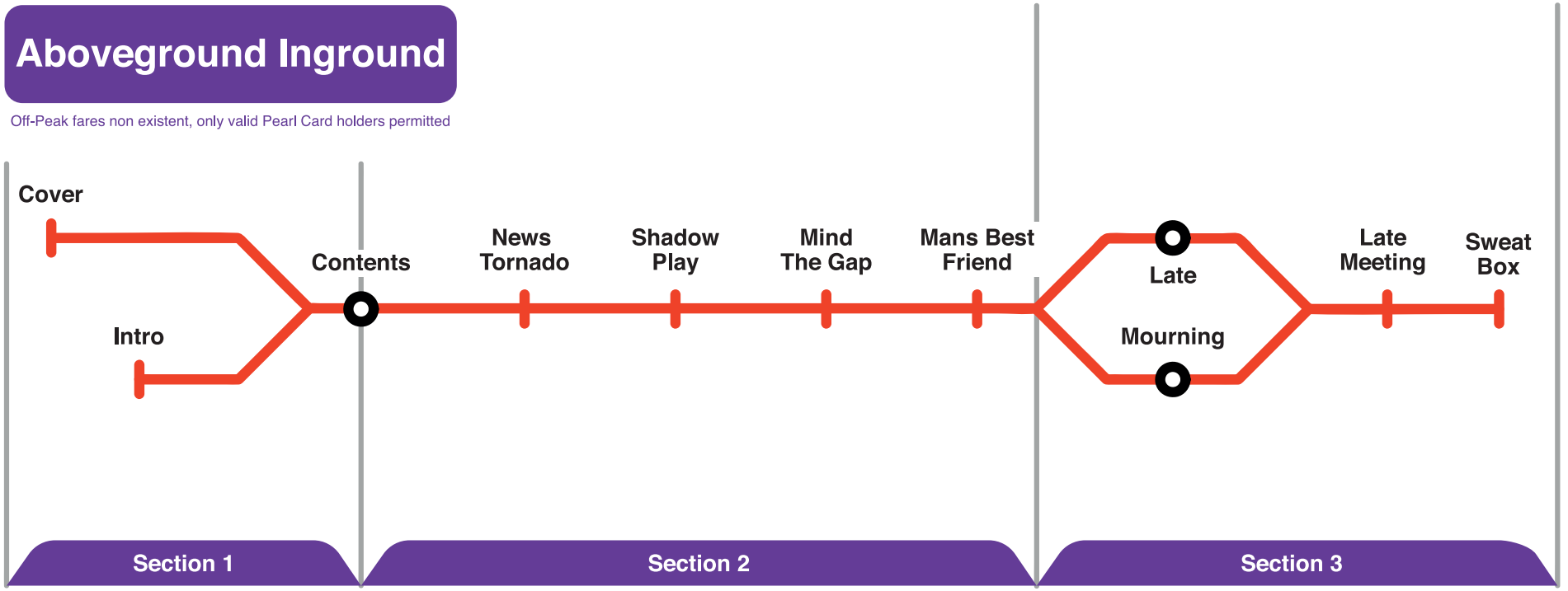
# Aboveground Inground

Off-Peak fares non existent, only valid Pearl Card holders permitted



# News Tornado

The wind whistles though my hair from the open carriage window, causing the ear-piercing clatter of the wheels on the tracks to resonate through the compacted hallway of seats. As the train gathers speed so does the wind in the carriage, ripping copies of The Metro out of passenger's hands, hurling them back and forth. No one seems to mind. Instead, they draw their phones out of their pockets. With the train travelling at full speed towards the next station, the swirling mass of paper twists and turns together like a flock of birds.

As the train approaches the next station the newspaper tornado defies physics, majestically dipping around passengers. At each station debris flutters through the doors along with boarding commuters, sucked in by the strengthening force of the swirling mass as it moves up and down the carriage.

Oblivious to his surroundings and entranced by his phone, the tornado approaches a middle-aged man sat in a priority seat. Tapping his mobile furiously and suddenly swiping it from the habitual grip of his hands and thrusting it into the churning storm of quickly forgotten news and debris. '*Oi! That thing just took my phone*'. No one payed him any attention before an elderly woman broke the silence, glaring down at him and rightfully mumbling 'Serves you right'.

# Shadowplay

Speeding away from the platform a warm breeze flew through the carriage, rustling the woman's hair opposite me before parting it back in place. Clattering out of the station an uneasy atmosphere begun to arise. I scanned the carriage; everyone was content in their seat so I drew out my book from my bag as we drifted into a tunnel.

Under the flickering lights with my headphones on, I tried to stay focused on my book and ignore the growing tense atmosphere Proving difficult to concentrate in the awkward light, I raise my head to find the woman opposite had vanished, but her shadow remained. Shocked by her disappearance I gasped, stood up and yelled in a freighted tone 'Where did she go?' rapidly taking in the rest of my surroundings. The only response to my startling out cry were beaming eyes staring back at me in the dark carriage, their bodies melting into the very fabric of the train as it remained in t he depths of the indground.

Glued to my seat I watched the shadows gleam under the strobing light, coming to life, replacing the bodies that once gave life to them. My heart throbbing in panic I attempted to calm down, closing my eyes and taking deep breaths. Repeating under my breath "It will all pass, this isn't real" as I could feel their presence grow stronger.

I open my eyes to a pitch-black carriage before a flicker of light unveils the shadows mysteriously dancing on the surfaces. I eased back into my chair as the next station was announced. As the train began to slow down, the shadows remained. Like falling dominoes, the lives that guide the shadows returned to their bodies as the rain doors drew open and a cool breeze rustled through the carriage. After gracefully making her way out into the haze of commuters the train geared out of the station. The unnerving atmosphere returned as light begun to flicker.

~

*Mind the gap*

*Mind the person*
*Mind the closing doors*
*Mind the bottle*
*Mind the rat*

*Mind the gap*

*The social gap*
*The class gap*

*Mind the gap*

*Mind your manners*
*Mind your attitude*
*Mind your own business*
*Mind your chat*

*Mind the gap*

# Mans Best Freind

He stood still like a statue in the middle of the aboveground. Centered. Humble with his head down reading. Passengers keep their distance with his dog slumped against his feet. This wasn't the first time I had been on the same train as him. The first few times I was taken in by his aura I put it down as a coincidence, that we were both returning home from work at the same time. Each time I walked pass him to exit at my stop, he tilted his head up and locked eyes with me and nodded his head before returning to his book. It was on the time I boarded an almost empty train at Dalston Kingsland late one Tuesday night, that there was something magical at play.

He stood in the same spot, in the same way, identical to every interaction I've had before. Emitting the same aura, I perched on a seat halfway down the carriage. Close enough to feel his presence yet not to disturb. Placing my headphones away in my bag, I watch the lights outside the train flicker, occasionally glancing at him through the corner of my eye. After stopping at a few a few stations, the carriage had emptied out onto Hackney Wick. The moment the doors closed his dog woke up and nudged his knee. 'Here girl' he softly condoled as he gently grazed his hand on his dog's head in comfort. His calming words echoed and moved into a whispering song.

His humbling voice carried through the train in a sweet melody, cradling us through the night before fading into the overhead speaker calling our attention to the final station and to pick up our belongings. I glanced up at him, catching each other's eyes and exchanging the same look we share each time our paths cross on the aboveground.

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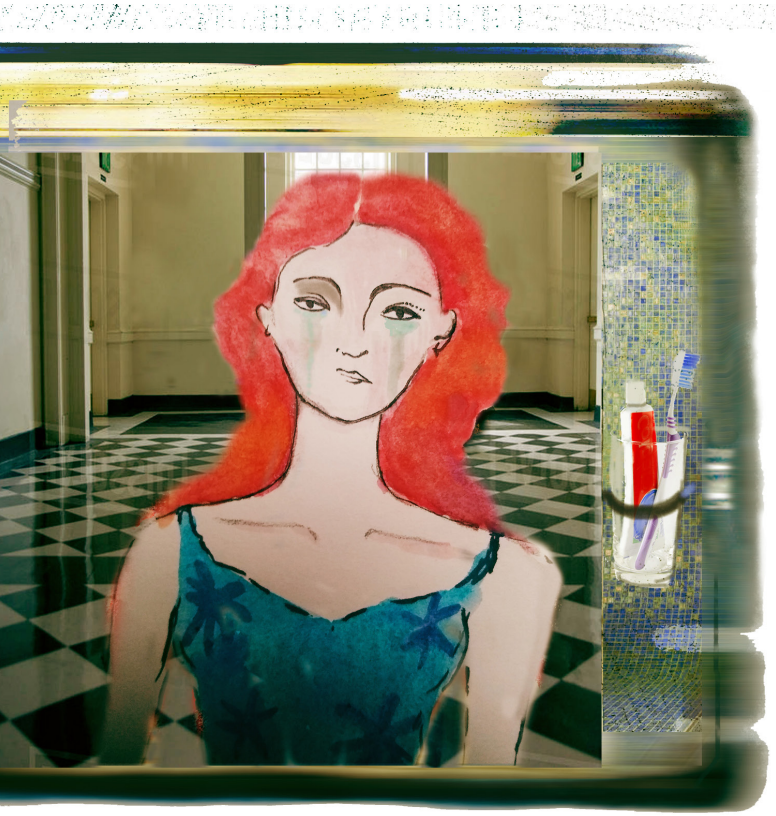
Way out

# Late

Apart from the tears rolling down her face she was motionless. Looking deeply into the reflection of her eyes in the mirror as the sadness and the reality of her situation sank in..



# Mourning

Buried in her subconscious was the overwhelmingreluctance to leave, drifting between unnecessary movements in her flat, leaving it to the last minute to make her train.

Scrambling for her pearl card at the turnstile, the panic of being late to a family funeral riddled her. Jostling through the crowds whilst holding in her desire to scream at every minor thing that agitated her, from the slow walkers to the over marketed and over funded advertisements that you could not escape from, she made it into the carriage just in time.

"*3 stops until bank where I then change onto the north ern line. The funeral has already started. I'll be there in twenty minutes. It's not that bad. It's ok.*" Ran through her mind. There was a dense heat that was unnerving. Staring down at her black scuffed doc martins to avoid any eye contact with the man opposite her, glancing up from his book, Bank was finally announced.

Bolting out of the train, swiftly maneuvering though the midday tunnels. The bland colours of dreary city worker uniforms blended with a horrible acoustic cover of Bob Marley's 'Don't worry, be happy' from a middle-aged white man wearing a 'keep calm and smoke weed' t-shirt, didn't help as she picked up her pace. In all the blur of the rush she bumped into a man turning a corner. His heavy breath and poignant face stopped her in her tracks, briefly locking eyes before muttering an apology for the initial shock and circumstances in which their paths have crossed. Calmly moving past, whilst holding his gaze she stated she was late, before running onto the platform into her awaiting train.

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# Late Meeting

An abrupt clash from outside disturbed the sleeping man, leaning over to see his phone on his bedside table had come unplugged. Jumping out of bed and racing downstairs, phone in hand, ‘Fuck I’m late’ bellowed through the kitchen. Bouncing out of the door, running on adrenaline and instant coffee, he marched down the street notes in hand.

Sat sweating in his suit in the early morning summer heat, attempting to practice his speech under his breath the man became unnerved. Jostling in his seat with his eyes darting around the carriage, an advert for ‘titp home’s, rent your ideal home in London’s most exciting new neighbourhood’ caught his attention. Annoyed at the name, and the political and economic climate which allows such a company to exist, a frustrated ‘Fucking Hell’ bellowed through the train. A few eyes peered over to check the source of the outburst, giving those who he locked eyes with a murmuring sorry. Gut wretched from the nerves and added pressure of being twenty minutes late for an important presentation, the time between each station compressed the carriage air. Grinding to a stop, a sudden breath of air swept through the train as he staggered off onto the platform.

In a panic he trudged his way through the Bank midweek working crowd, their faces mirrored the bleak subterranean conditions. At momentous speed he turned a corner and accidently collided into a woman on the way, he locked eyes and apologised, catching her off her guard he could sense she was in a scurry too as she murmured sorry. Taken in by the seemingly awkward moment their eyes remained locked as commuters barged through them, before she rushed off stating ‘I’m late’, faintly replying ‘So am I’ as she drifted around the corner.

Quickly dashing for his train as it pulled into the station, he flew into a seat easing into the last part of his journey. His eyes drifted through the passengers sitting opposite him, their faces blurred into the speeding black backdrop of the tunnel. He knew he would not make it.

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# London’s most exciting new neighbourhood

# Sweat Box

Sweat drips down my face. Eyes on my every move. I pretend to scroll through my phone, whilst its locked on the last percent- it will last. The last percent the strongest. I'm heading home at 10 am on a Saturday morning. A slight cool breeze brushes my face and relaxes me for a short moment.

As the doors slide shut and the train takes off, stifling heat compresses me into my seat. I seem to be the only one agitated by these conditions. Having already changed trains twice because of the stifling conditions, a sense of entrapment sunk in. I jump out of my seat and carefully maneuver through the carriage towards the door as we begin to slow down. It's the anxious atmosphere held in the carriage that makes me tremble – or am I just being paranoid?

'You are now arriving at Moorgate, change here for Circle, Hammersmith & City, Metropolitan and Northern lines.' This is familiar enough. As I jump up and the doors glide open, I hear the last calming sounds filter through my headphones before my phone grows tired of being alive. I keep my headphones on, even if they are contributing to my everlasting perspiration, they provide a reality buffer.

The wind created by the train sweeps across my red face, before being swallowed back into the darkness of the tunnel ahead. My stomach rumbles from the lack of food and the feeling of being trapped on the platform. Unable to confront the protruding looks in the train again, I watch two go by. Pretending I am waiting for the next train and building up the courage to sit back in the anxiety inducing sweat boxes.

Leaning against the wall I stare blankly at the platform opposite. The next train rolled in with an abnormal clatter and flickering lights. A man with a similar style stood impatiently behind the doors, his eyes darting around whilst looking like he was talking to himself. The train doors burst open and he flew out, muttering '*it will all pass, this isn't real*'.

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